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ABSTRACT

In this grade 6 interdisciplinary language arts and social studies unit, students are required to assume the role of a team and describe their country's participation in trade along the Silk Road. Countries represented in the unit include Egypt, Italy, Iraq, India, Israel, and China. The team is asked to create a display showing artifacts, journal entries, and maps of people involved in Silk Road trade. Students are provided detailed instructions on how to complete the activity and a large list of resources, including Internet sites. The teacher's guide ties the unit to California state standards, provides adaptations for special needs students, and gives suggestions on how to conduct and evaluate the unit. (RJC)

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Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE): Connecting California's Classrooms to the World

In Celebration of the Silk Road

Sixth Grade Lesson
by Gail Desler

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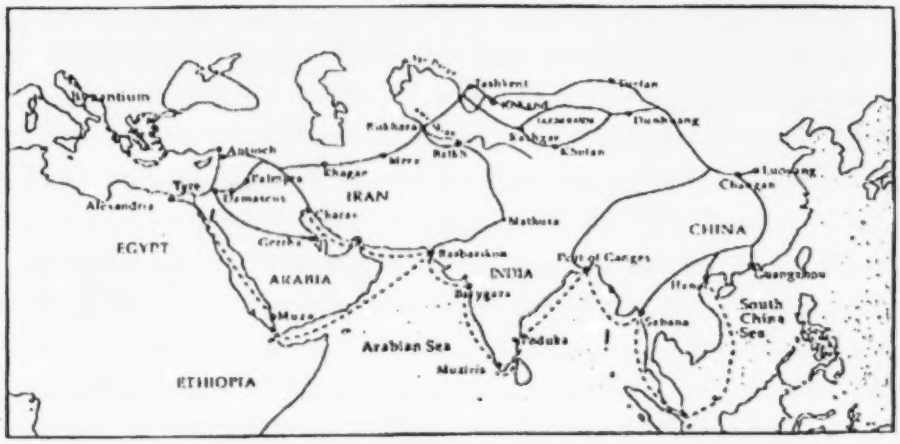
In Celebration of the Silk Road



Adapted from : Maps on File

To the many merchants, wandering armies, and adventurers of our ancient civilizations, the Silk Road served as an important communication link between cultures and economies. During the time of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE - 220 CE), this 5000-mile stretch of trade routes was possibly the world's first "Internet," linking Asia to Europe and Africa. Today one can travel the Silk Road and still find evidence of the people, ideas, and goods that traveled and transformed its links.

Caravan on the Silk Road

Source: Silk Road: A History by I. Franck and D. Brownstone

The Task

Congratulations! As a member of the Council of National Treasures, you have been selected to travel to the province of Xinjiang, China, to represent your country at the First International Celebration of the Silk Road. The Xinjiang Trade Commission (***XTC***) is hosting this exciting event to encourage trade and tourism with the outside world-- and to perhaps rekindle the spirit of cultural exchange that once linked this province to points both east and west.

The celebration will culminate with the opening of the Silk Road Museum in Xinjiang's historic city of Turpan, which was once a much welcomed oasis stop for caravans passing through the province. Today, as in the time of the Han Dynasty, Turpan is a living example of cultural exchange along the Silk Road. Centuries later, the city continues to be a hotbed of ethnic hostilities, culture clash, and melding. Your country is invited to help promote unity out of diversity by making an important contribution to the Silk Road Museum. The ***XTC*** has offered to reserve a display area in the museum for any nation that once traveled the silk routes and would now be willing to donate a national artifact that is at least 1,800 years old and could have by been transported along the Silk Road.

Your country considers the invitation to celebrate and share in this unique period of world history not only as an honor, but also as an excellent opportunity to renew trade with Xinjiang, which is rapidly developing its oil and coal industries. Therefore, the Council of National Treasures has been given the go-ahead to select an appropriate artifact, design the display, and prepare for the trip to Turpan.

The ***XTC*** has requested that participating nations use the following guidelines in designing their displays:

All displays must arrive on a self-standing three-fold display board and should include:

- The actual artifact (or a drawing, scanning, or photograph of the artifact) - Label the artifact with its name, a brief description of its purpose or function, its approximate age, and its place of origin.
- A journal entry entitled "A Day in the Life of . . ." - You will need to create a fictional person who could have made, transported, traded, purchased, or stolen the artifact.
- A labeled map that shows the route your artifact could have traveled from its place of origin to a logical destination along the Silk Road.
- A possible logo for the Silk Road Museum - The ***XTC*** is seeking a logo that symbolizes the relationship between Xinjiang's past and present and captures the spirit of trade and mutual influence that once connected China's "Wild West" to the rest of the ancient world. Be sure to attach a rationale for your logo.

You will be presenting your display to a team of ***XTC*** officials and, of course, the international press. The key to a successful presentation is a well-planned project in which *each* team member has helped create a museum-quality display and is prepared to answer any questions from the officials or the press. Your team will consist of a historian, an archaeologist, an anthropologist, a cartographer, and a graphic designer. Good luck with your research, display, presentation--and team work!

The Process

Once you have drawn or been assigned the name of the country your team will represent, you need to start making preparations for your trip, display, and press conference. For full credit, the display should be eye-catching, historically accurate, and must follow ***XTC*** guidelines (see **The Task**). Use the *Action Plan* (Handout #1) to help your team organize and complete the roles/jobs listed below:

Artifact Design/Reproduction - The *Comparative History Chart* (Handout #3) might be a useful starting point for your research. Remember, your artifact should date back at least 1,800 years.
Task Masters: archaeologist, anthropologist

"A Day in the Life of . . ." Journal - Content is essential, but spelling, grammar, and punctuation also matter!
Task Master: historian

Labeled Map - Include elevations and whatever else you think an audience should know about the incredibly diverse geography of the Silk Route.
Task Master: cartographer

Museum Logo Design - Use the *World Cultures Graphic Organizer* (Handout #2) to help guide your research on the culture, history, and geography of Xinjiang.
Task Master: graphic designer

Your presentation to the press should be 5 -10 minutes long and should include all the members of your team. Use the *Oral Evaluation Checklist* (Handout #4) as a practice guide.

Resources

The following resources will provide you with background information on the history and culture of **Turpan/Xinjiang**:

Silk Road Foundation-Xinjiang Studies/News Updates from Xinjiang
http://www.silk-road.com/
Pam Logan's Journal--a first-hand account of her recent travels to China (click on Turpan)
http://www.alumni.caltech.edu/%7Epamlogan/srart.html
Oliver Wild's Silk Road Photos
http://www.ess.uci.edu/~oliver/silk2.html

Sites for Egyptian Artifacts

Exhibit of Artifacts--Memphis State Museum
http://www.memphis.edu/egypt/artifact.html
Oriental Institute-University of Chicago-Egypt page
http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/MUS/HIGH/OI_Museum_Egypt.html
Ancient Egyptian Art from the Permanent Collection of Emory University
http://www.emory.edu/CARLOS/egypt.gal.html

Sites for Mesopotamian artifacts:

Treasures From the Royal Tombs of Ur--University of Pennsylvania Museum (click on *more;* click on *Ancient Mesopotamia Excavation*; click on *itinerary*)
http://www.museum.upenn.edu/
Ancient Art of the Near East from the Permanent Collection of Emory University
http://www.emory.edu/CARLOS/n.east.html
Oriental Institute Museum-University of Chicago
http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/MUS/HIGH/OI_Museum_Mesopotamia.html

Sites for Israeli Artifacts:

Oriental Institute--University of Chicago
http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/MUS/HIGH/OI_Museum_Palestine.html
Hecht Museum Welcome Page (click on here to get to images of artifacts)
http://research.haifa.ac.il/~hecht/index.html
Emory University Museum (scroll to the section on Jericho)
http://www.emory.edu/CARLOS/n.east.html
Yale Library
http://www.library.yale.edu/exhibition/judaica/bcsml.html

Sites for Indian Artifacts:

Harappa
http://www.harappa.com/
Madhubhani Painting--the Women of India
http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/gthursby/rc/index.htm

Sites for Greek Artifacts:

Greek Artifacts from Room 68 of the British Museum
http://www.wgfl.westminster.gov.uk/wgfldir/show/allsouls/bm/ag1.html
Greek Jewelry-5000 Years of Tradition
http://www.gl.umbc.edu/~achatt1/Recip/recipes.html
Greek Art
http://www-lib.haifa.ac.il/www/art/gr_menu.html
Collection of Pottery
http://www.culture.gr/2/21/214/21405m/e21405m3.html
Perseus Project-Tufts University
http://medusa.perseus.tufts.edu/art&arch.html
Ancient Greek World: An Introduction
http://www.museum.upenn.edu/Greek_World/
Ancient Roman and Greek Coins
http://www.math.montana.edu/%7Eumsfwest/numis/index.html

Sites for Roman Artifacts:

Roman Artifacts from the David M. Robinson Collection
http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/classics/roman.html
Roman Artifacts and Coins for the Ancient Tourist
http://www.ancientcoinmarket.com/mt/mtarticle3/1.html
Ancient Roman and Greek Coins
http://www.math.montana.edu/%7Eumsfwest/numis/index.html

Sites of Chinese Artifacts:

The Art of China Home Page
http://pasture.ecn.purdue.edu/%7Eagenhtml/agenmc/china/art.html
NM's Creative Impulse: Great Links for China
http://history.evansville.net/china.html
Chinese Art Forms
http://www.isaacnet.com/culture/

Learning Advice

Your teacher will help you to find research sources for this project. Make sure that the artifacts you select from your country's past were crafted from materials available during or before the Han Dynasty .

Your evaluators will be looking for a high-quality, informative display as well as an enthusiastic, well-prepared press conference. You will also be evaluated on your contributions to the group effort. Refer to your *Action Plan* to make sure responsibilities and work load have been divided evenly. Do your share and make every minute of class research time count!

Evaluation

As a class, you will work with your teacher to develop a rubric based on the following criteria:

- Amount of research reflected in your display
- Historical accuracy of your documents: artifact, map, journal, logo
- Visual appeal of your documents
- Well-delivered press conference
- Positive contributions to your group
- Use of class time

Conclusion

Can you see the effects of the Silk Road in Turpan today? Do cultures still exchange people, goods and ideas? Do you see any evidence in your own culture of how trade influences change in how people think or act?

Reflection

Think about the process you went through to take this Silk Road project from the planning stages to the presentation.

- What was the most difficult part of this project? Why?
- What strategies did you use in putting your presentation together?
- Was your action plan effective? How could you have made it more effective?
- Who showed the most leadership on your team? How?
- Do you feel your presentation was effective? How could you have improved it?

Handout #1

Name:
Assigned Country:

Action Plan - Searching the Silk Road

In order to successfully complete your Silk Road Project by _____, your team needs to write a detailed action plan that clearly explains how you intend to complete the assigned tasks before the deadline. Your plan should show how you will divide the tasks, who is responsible for each task, and when each task will be completed. Use the chart below to help you organize your in-class and at-home time.

Task	Person responsible	Due date

Handout #2

Culture of _____

Geographical Setting

Political (Leadership, citizenship, decision-making institutions)	**Economic** (Resources, production, needs, transportation, division of labor, technology, type of economy, decision-making)
Social (Family life, customs, education, class and caste, leisure activities, decision-making, roles)	
Beliefs (Religion, myths, rituals)	**Aesthetics** (Art, literature, music, dance, leisure activities)

Historical Setting

Handout #3

Comparative History Chart

Dynasty	*Significant Events in China*	*Parallel Events in the West*
Shang Dynasty c.1523-1122 B.C.E.	Oracle Bones	Abraham settles in Canaan c.1900 B.C.E. Hammurabi of Babylon c.1792-1750 B.C.E. Queen Hatshepsut takes control 1489 B.C.E. Pharaoh Ramses II 1292-1225 B.C.E. Trojan War c.1184 B.C.E. Aryans settle in Indus Valley c. 500 B.C.E.
Zhou Dynasty c.1122-256 B.C.E.	Confucius c.551-479 B.C.E Mencius c.372-289 B.C.E.	Nebuchadnezzar of New Babylonian Empire 605-562 B.C.E. Nebuchadnezzar burns Jerusalem 587 B.C.E. Buddha in India c.563-483 Etruscans conquer Rome c.575 B.C.E. Founding of Rome 509 B.C.E. Battle of Marathon 409 B.C.E. Trial of Socrates 399 B.C.E. Alexander the Great 356-323 B.C.E. Asoka comes to power c.269 B.C.E.
Qin Dynasty c. 256-206 B.C.E.	Great Wall Book burning—censorship	2nd Punic War
Han Dynasty 206-220 B.C.E.	Rule of Wudi 141-87 B.C.E. Zhang Qian explores the west (Afghanistan) 139 B.C.E. China makes contact with Rome	Birth of Jesus c.8-4 B.C.E. Rule of Augustus c.31 B.C.E-C.E. 14

Handout #4 Name:

Oral Presentation Evaluation

Use the following table as a practice guide to help prepare you and your group members for your final oral presentation.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Weak
Prepared for report				
Presented material in an interesting way				
Used visual aids effectively				
Organized presentation logically				
Made eye contact with audience				
Did not read presentation				
Spoke loudly enough				
Spoke slowly and clearly				
Listened to whoever else was speaking				

Teacher Notes

Grade Level/Unit:

H/SS Framework: Grade 6 Ancient China

Standards

Draft H/SS Standards
Grade 6: Students address an event or issue regarding ancient civilizations; marshall needed information of the time and place; and present a cogent, objective analysis of it, drawing on valid primary and secondary resources.

Language Arts Standards
Grade 6: Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. Writing exhibits awareness of audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, bodies of supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students successfully use the stages of the writing process.

Lesson Purpose:

Students will explore the ancient trade routes of the Silk Road, with a focus on Turpan, a caravan stop in China's westernmost province of Xinjiang. They will identify artifacts from the countries that once traveled this route, and research how and when these items might have arrived in the city of Turpan.

Goals:

Related to History-Social Science content, students will...

- understand the diverse geography of China
- learn art styles and techniques of the ancient world
- understand the impact of trade upon cultures

Related to Information Literacy Skills:

- Students will use problem-solving skills to organize a project action plan
- Students will evaluate and select resources
- Students will organize their information in writing (brochure, labeled poster, interview, newspaper articles, fact sheet)
- Students will organize their information graphically (maps, mural)
- Students will present their projects to the class (oral presentation)

Length of Lesson: Five 45-50 minute periods

Additional Resources/Materials:

Internet resources; atlases; *A Message of Ancient Days* (or other world history texts); *National Geographic Magazine*, Vol. 189, No 3, March 1996; *Eyewitness Books* (China, Greece, Rome, Bible Lands); encyclopedias; The Silk Road: A History by Irene Frank and David Brownstone (this invaluable resource is now out of print, but is available at most UC libraries)

Background information that might be helpful: *Along the Silk Road: People, Interaction, And Cultural Exchange*, developed by the China Project, Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education (SPICE)--an outstanding unit as well as an excellent resource; *Xinjiang The Silk Road: Islam's Overland Route to China* by Peter Yung (Oxford University Press, 1986); *The Silk Road* by Luce Boulnois (translated by Dennis Chamberlain, E.P. Dutton & Co.,Inc. 1966); *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road* by Peter Hopkirk (John Murray Publishers, London 1980)

Some useful Internet sources are Oliver Wild's web page

> http://www.atm.ch.cam.ac.uk/~oliver/silk.html and Pam Logan's page
> http://www.alumni.caltech.edu/%7Epamlogan/silkroad/index.html

Lesson sequence:

Introduction

To familiarize your students with the geography of Asia, I recommend beginning the unit by devoting a class period to the Political Map Hunt Activity from Stanford's SPICE publication *Mapping Asia*.

To introduce your students to the "voices" of the Silk Road, you might want to hand out the following poem written by the Chinese princess Liu Xijun about 110 B.C.E. She was given in marriage to a "barbarian" chief of Wusun, an area northeast of Tien Shan Mountains, wild yet strategically important to the security of Han trade routes.

> My people have married me
> In a far corner of Earth:
> Sent me away to a strange land,
> To the king of the Wu-sun.
>
> The round tent is my palace,
> Its walls are made of felt,
> Dried meat is my only food,
> Koumiss is my drink.

Endlessly I dream of my country,
And my heart is all bruised.
Oh to be the yellow swan
That returns to its homeland!

Have your students read this poem in their groups and brainstorm for its meaning. What do you know about Liu Xijun's living conditions? Her diet? Her state of mind? Her dreams? What does this poem tell us about the time in which it was written?

The World Cultures Model handout could be used to help the students organize and record their understanding of the poem.

Starting the project:

Draw countries - Assign or have your teams (up to 7 with 4-6 members each) pick a country card.

EGYPT- Has the style of your artifacts been influenced by the conquest of Alexander the Great - or do your artifacts date back even further in Egyptian history?
ITALY - Travel back to the grandeur of the Roman Empire. Your artifacts could have been crafted during the reign of Augustus, or earlier.
IRAQ - Where in the region that was once known as Mesopotamia would be the origin of your artifacts? Sumer? Babylon? Assyria?
INDIA - After your conquest by Alexander the Great, many civilizations may have wanted to trade with you.
ISRAEL - The land of Canaan was known as a battlefield but also as an important market and trading route.
CHINA - Even though Xinjiang is part of China, it is also an autonomous (independent) region and often has its differences with the Chinese government in Beijing. If you wish to keep your artifacts in China, you too must show what you could find in Turpan, along with a reasonable theory as to when and how the artifacts were brought there.

Start Brainstorming Session

Help the students define the task by having them brainstorm as a class the following three questions:

What do we know?

What do we need to know?

Where can we find out what we need to know?

Record their answers on the board or overhead. Tell them a high-quality presentation will be the result of research and teamwork. Explain that they will be using the Internet as well as other electronic and printed resources (books, magazine articles) from the class and school library.

Guiding the process:

Handout the action plan. Each team member needs to complete one! Stress how important it is for them to start each class period in an organized manner and with a purpose. Without a clearly defined plan, they will have difficulty completing the task on time.

Hold daily briefings with each group. By meeting with each group for a few minutes, you will be able to guide their progress, check their process, and verify that all team members are contributing to the effort.

Adaptations for special needs students:

Since this task involves research writing, and layout, teachers may wish to assign the tasks within groups so that each student can both work to a strength and develop an area in which he or she is not yet strong. Students with limited skills might be encouraged to use only one website as a resource, so they can spend more time with writing and creating the displays.

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